WHAT WELL-DRESSED WOMEN WILL WEAR

By ANNE RITTENHOUSE

The Effect of American Wealth on Paris Styles

Serge, satin, crepe and gabardine are sturdy materials that are offered. Capes and waistcoats play the dominant roles. Extravagant silk embroidery has given way to bold patterns of woollen and twine threads

DINNER GOWN OF BLACK SATIN AND JET—Loose sleeves of tulle hang from arm caps of jet.

AN ODD BLOUSE SENT OVER BY PARIS—Of gray Georgette crepe worn over pale pink chiffon. The front of the blouse, sleeves and middle of the back are embroidered in silver.

JENNY USES TAFFETA AND JET—A gown of black taffeta embroidered with jet beads. Very narrow at the hem, with short, tight sleeves.

COAT SUIT OF BLUE SERGE WITH BLACK SILK BRAID—Vest, collar and cuffs embroidered in blue wool.

GOLD GOWN BY GERMAINE, OF PARIS—Made of gold tissue, black tulle and bands of black and gold ribbon. Scarf sleeves of black tulle.

ONE-PIECE FROCK BY MME. GEORGETTE—Of blue corded crepe and heavy jersey silk. Coat faced with lapels of white silk finished with blue silk tassels.

Chemise Robe for Evening

Among the new evening gowns from France this spring the twelfth century tunic is as frequently seen as is the street gowns, but the effect of the two is strongly differentiated. For the evening the designers use a narrow, slim, primitive slip of satin or metallic cloth, the latter preferred. Over this slip drops a much wider, more voluminous, transparent robe. It is cut like a chemise; it has a half low decolletage; the sleeves usually cover the entire arm, but are cut to fall half a foot away from it, and the entire effect is one of exquisite veiling.

Doucet does this in the most brilliant manner, and he shows his competitors something in the way of underslip, making a corselet and then a short skirt of soft gold tissue, which gives a far more graceful, undulating movement of the body when it is seen beneath the transparent chemise.

There are chemise gowns of rare lace, seldom in white, but in ivory tints and also in cloudy gray. These are dropped over a slim underslip of tissue, silver and steel as well as gold, and the note of color is given by an extraordinary sash. It may be of Chinese blue taffeta, of splendid Chinese brocade, of deep gold and black brocaded ribbon, and one end of it always trails down the back panel and adds to the brilliancy of the short train.

True, There Are Sober Clothes

Mind you, there is no disposition shown by the French designers, as they have expressed their genius in the new clothes, to omit all the fabrics that are sensible and economical. Black satin, blue serge, gray jersey cloth and several shades of gabardine are ruling street costumery.

Metal tissues and laces are lavishly used for the afternoon and the evening, but they are sobered by miles of chiffon. Sturdy crepe de chine, which looks fragile and is not, is offered in the smartest gowns for the street.

There are one-piece frocks as well as suits, and capes have superseded top coats. Elaborate and expensive embroidery has given way to ornamentation by means of wool or twine, and intricate machine stitching is abandoned in favor of bits of applied material, straight rows of military braid or folds of corded satin.

Lace is used as though Belgium had been reinstated and every one of the lace weavers working overtime. Flounces, capes, sleeves and panels of lace are dropped on narrow, slim underslips of satin.

Satin and serge are combined for those who want to wear a frock for the next six months without feeling uncomfortably warm or cold.

Waistcoats, the styles of which were drawn from all the epochs preceding this one, are used in coats, which gives the economical woman a chance to refurbish her last year's suit and feel herself quite in the picture. The French designers knew that they were offering a sop to the economists in promoting this accessory.

Sturdy pique has been revived for those who do not care to invest in handkerchief linen, perishable batiste or expensive flowered voile. These suits and frocks of pique are trimmed with velvet, as in older days, and all the dyes that France has manufactured for her own use have been brought to bear upon white and cream lace in order to make harmonious costumes; and this trick again gives the woman of slender means a chance to look exceedingly smart through the medium of dipping yellow lace in a small quantity of reliable dye.

Paris has sent over a multiple number of short, straight jackets, with fronts that do not meet, and in the space between is displayed a ruffled front with a turn-over collar and a dotted foulard cravat. This little front is basted into the coat, and thereby saves one from using a whole shirtwaist, with its accompanying laundry bill.

There is no disputing the fact that French women have yielded to the American desire to wear short skirts on the street, and the skirts of suits in these new clothes are both narrow and short. The women who appeared on the street in them without leggings or high shoes have created unpleasant criticism, which should compel them to change their style.

The smart women run a legging or a high cloth-top boot well up under the hem of these short skirts, and the effect is military and pleasing. But at the very moment that we are accepting with enthusiasm this continued style of short and narrow garments, the prophets say that the real French skirts are growing longer. And the smart American designers say the same. They are making the garments slim, without using an inch of surplus material, but they are dropping them to the ankles, omitting the leggings and the high boots, and coming back to the flat-heeled pumps with broad ribbon bows across the vamp.

Three or four of the best houses in New York emphasize these skirts, and those who are tired of the brevity of the skirts we have worn for years are accepting this new type of garment with more than the usual enthusiasm. If it had fulness it would be impossible for street usage, but its narrowness and the slight bias line at the sides, that comes from the material being pulled backward and upward, make it a pleasing picture on the street and an artistic contrast to the prevailing garment.

Miles of Tulle

Even when France starts out to be demure she changes her mind and gets a little fling of gayety into the most sombre gown. For example, she makes a black satin restaurant frock in the style of the eleventh century, with the long chemise, the slight girdling about the hips and the half-low decolletage. Well and good. But she is weary of the black surface by the time she gets to the armholes and the neckline, so she swings in a pair of floating Chinese sleeves of jade green tulle edged with jet, and she winds a narrow scarf of tulle once around the neck, pulls its fulness up over the chin and weights its ends with jet tassels. When green isn't used, king's blue or wine color is chosen.

Every French designer used what she could of colored tulle. There must have been a competition over there as to who could reduce the amount of tulle in France most quickly.

One designer took it into her head to omit white collars and use as a substitute tulle wrapped about the neck and tied in a bow. This fashion is already considered quite smart over here. In restaurants, for luncheons and for any affair where the hat is retained the tulle which covers it forms this collar, and sometimes drops in long ends from the nape of the neck to the knees.

Now don't jump to the conclusion that you can pick up two or three yards of colored maline, put it over your shoulders in the fashion that has been acceptable for four years, and think yourself part and parcel of this new movement.

Tulle is not used in that way. It does not go over the shoulders. It is made into voluminous sleeves; it is wrapped about the waist or the hips and forms a bustle bow at the side or back; it is tied straight around the neck, with a huge bow at the back or under the chin, if the face can stand it; it is made into a bat-like cape and attached to the shoulders and arms with jet bracelets; it makes no pretence of matching the color of the gown. It is a brilliant note that brings a sombre gown from the shadows into the sunlight.

Bernard's Short Coat

To see what a noted Paris tailor can do with the Eton jacket to make it different from the mannish garment which we accented in the early winter, one has only to glance at this sketch.

This suit has been brought to America and cordially received. It is built of blue serge, black silk braid and black satin. The skirt is of the satin, narrow and slim, with loose panels of braided blue serge at each side. This movement of skirts is so dominant throughout all the new fashions that it is well to absorb it in the mind. The heavy weight of the braid keeps the serge in place, and one may use a colored lining, if it is considered desirable. The lining on these panels is black, which is in the best taste.

The short jacket is cut up in front, after the manner of the Directoire coats, and it drops down to the hips at sides and back. The material is blue serge, and the satin of the skirt is introduced into collar, cuffs and waistcoat, which covers the waistline. Against the black surface is a bold, primitive embroidery in Nattier blue wool.

By the way, the jacket is slightly shorter in the back than at the sides, in order that it may display a bustle bow of black satin which is attached to the skirt.

French Frocks Show Unusual Drapery at the Ankle Line

When the Americans first saw the ragged hems of the new frocks they believed that no woman in her right senses would accept such an innovation. It went against the traditions in clothes which had been established for centuries. Nobody but a gypsy or an American Indian delighted in a skirt that bobbed up and down at the foot-line. It was untidy, said the critics; it was slovenly.

But the world accepted it, nevertheless, and for several years we have looked with complacence upon hems that had no idea of being regular or of even length. From that beginning came the desire to pull skirts up in different ways at the hem, and to-day we have a resurrection of this fashion.

Return to Ancient Custom

The gown which is shown in the sketch is a new one by Agnes, of Paris, brought to this country and copied for American women. The skirt of black satin is an excellent example of the manner in which dozens of the new house frocks are draped at the hem. It is a very old trick, and one can find it in the pictures of long ago fashion leaders of Europe. It was probably the first one indulged in by great dressmakers to start a new fashion in skirts for queens.

Over the satin skirt, which is draped at the side, goes a chemise tunic of jet heavily weighted at the sides by jet tassels which, as the mannequin said who wore the gown, bruised her ankles as though somebody had been throwing snowballs at them. The bodice is of tulle with suspenders of satin. There is a girdle of the same material which goes through a slit in the bodice and ends in a sash weighted with jet. The sleeves are made from short caps of jet, from which flow irregular widths of black tulle.

Ribbon to Play a Brilliant Role

When one caught glimpses of the magnificence of the new ribbons, it did not take a detective's mind to realize that they were made for a serious purpose, that they were not turned out merely to flutter in holiday array from gowns and hats. No class of industrial workers would spend so much time upon an article of commerce unless there was to be a broad demand for it.

At the beginning of last winter the ribbons of the world began to take on a new and serious importance. They went back to the days when artists of parts put their skill and inspiration into these bands of fabric. Instead of being just pink, blue and red ribbons, they became backgrounds for superb ornamentation, for magnificence of design and treatment. They were gold and silver, they were embroidered, they were stamped with vivid flowers. They went so far above the average and climbed so high on the pinnacle of artistic merit that those who studied fabrics realized that they would be substituted for more commonplace fabrics, as well as for new materials.

Many Varieties of Ribbon

There are even ribbons with woollen embroidery, which we are assured are made from odds and ends of threads in order not to break the conservation method, and which will replace bands of woollen fabric.

There are broad ribbons of gold and silver, of black touched with jet, of cream and oyster-colored satin stamped with pompadour designs; there are Roman stripes, and there are colorings in soft taffeta ribbons which we have rarely seen before this season.

Gown of Gold Ribbon

Germaine, of Paris, has sent to this country a most successful gown made from broad ribbons of gold and black brocade. The tight underslip is of golden yellow tissue, soft and yielding to the movements of the body. The top skirt is of black tulle slightly gathered to the waistline, but held down to the figure, so that it will not flare out, by means of these gold and black ribbons that hang from the slightly high-waisted bodice to the ankles. The bodice is made of the ribbons going around the figure, and over each shoulder is a narrow plain gold ribbon holding shoulder pieces of flesh-colored tulle. Attached to each gold band is a scarf of black tulle that hangs over the front and back of the figure and floats away over the arms.

This gown is copied in all black for those who do not care to indulge in the brilliancy of the gold. It shows the Spanish influence, and it has an amazing grace.

The arrangement of the straps on the shoulders should be called to the attention of those who are uncertain about the arrangement of the long tulle drapery that drops from over the arms this season. As you notice in the sketch, the straps are placed well forward over the neck, and the tight-fitting flesh tulle that goes under and over the arms holds the bodice securely in place and allows the tulle sleeves to be lightly attached to the top of the shoulder, where they will not feel any of the strain of the lifted arms.

A Heavy Weave of Silk Jersey Substitute for Woollen

Rodier is the man who invents fabrics for the civilized world.

Therefore, when it was known that Rodier had put out a superior and durable weave of silk jersey that would replace woollen fabrics the world received the news with the interest it deserved.

The French are using silk jersey to conserve wool. America will do the same. The Council of National Defense only asked the American dressmakers to use not more than four and a half yards of woollen fabric in a costume, but we have done much better than that since the request was made. There are gowns that are made from a yard and a half of wool, and there are hundreds of frocks that haven't any wool at all, except a touch of embroidery.

The Redingote Gown

When one announces that France and America have both yielded to the lure of the short jacket, there is no intention to mislead the women of the country into the belief that no other kind of coat is tolerated. One has only to glance at the exhibitions of new clothes to find that a short and a long coat are shown within the same ten minutes. It is a matter of choice.

However, it must be admitted that the long coats are more constantly used as a part of a frock than as part of a suit. It is when one wants to employ the heavy jersey that one is apt to see in the redingote a chance for good work.

Take the sketch to-day, for instance, which is a gown designed by Mme. Georgette, of Paris. It is made in black and blue. The long coat gives the effect of a suit, but is, in reality, a redingote. In the entire costume there is no wool. The coat itself is made of corded crepe, with wide lapels faced with white silk accented by tassels of silk thread. There is a thick blue silk cord at the waist which ties at the side. The underslip is of the heavy silk jersey and clings to the figure with the simplicity of an unadorned chemise.